



Lake Mead National Recreation Area Environmental Education



CLASSROOM PROGRAM

Grade 2

“Animals of the Night”

THEME

Nocturnal animals have special adaptations which enable them to function at night.

OBJECTIVES

Students will compare at least three senses animals use to help them survive at night.

Students will compare characteristics of at least three common nocturnal animals.

Students will name at least one reason why some desert animals are nocturnal.

VOCABULARY

adaptation - a physical or behavioral feature of an animal or plant that helps it survive in it's habitat

nocturnal - active by night

diurnal - active by day

predator - an animal that lives mostly by hunting and eating other animals

prey - an animal hunted or killed by another animal for food

senses - the ability to see, hear, smell, taste or touch

echolocation - the process used by some animals to identify and measure the distance to objects in the environment. Echolocation involves emission of high-frequency sounds which are reflected back from a surface, thus indicating the relative distance and direction of such surfaces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Desert animals have developed many strategies for living in a hot and dry environment. One of the most common adaptations is to be active at night when the desert cools down. Because nocturnal animals are active at night, they can conserve water, escape the heat of the day, and search for food and water under the cover of darkness to protect them from predators.

BEFORE THE RANGER VISITS YOUR CLASSROOM

Have each student create their own "night journal". Make sure the journals have a place for the date, time, what the student can see, hear, smell, and their feelings about being outside at night along with any other observations the student would like to record. The students should take about five minutes to observe and record in their journals each night.

AFTER THE RANGER VISITS YOUR CLASSROOM

Now that the students have learned the importance of being nocturnal, take time to compare one nocturnal desert animal with a diurnal desert animal. Which one would they like to be and why?

REFERENCES

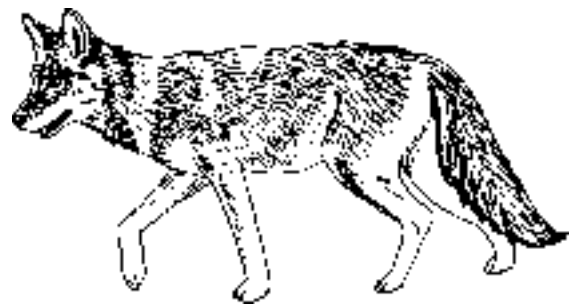
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